Amendments to Claims

Claims 1 to 24 (**canceled**)

Claim 25 (currently amended) In a <u>flight firming</u> process for automated firming of <u>flight</u> reservations made by a reserving entity for services ~~or goods~~ which are to be confirmed by payment for said services ~~or goods~~ prior to delivery of the services ~~or goods~~, which reservations are listed in a central database of reservations, the database being accessed with a computer operated by a computer program having a set of limiting standards to be applied to each reservation determined to be unconfirmed, the reserving entity being informed in an automated manner in accordance with the set of limiting standards of the need to confirm the reservation before expiration of time limitations established by the set of limiting standards, the improvement comprising:

coordinating access to the database to acquire data for operations therewith and scheduling said operations; and,

returning the data to the database after operations are performed thereto to a predetermined location within the database, to thereby update the database, all steps being accomplished by the computer program.

Claim 26 (previously presented) In the process of claim 25 wherein the predetermined location is a queue and the data is present in the form of a multiplicity of batches.

Claim 27 (previously presented) In the process of claim 26 wherein the improvement further comprises the step of increasing sizes of the batches in response to increasing levels of process activity.

Claim 28 (previously presented) In the process of claim 25 wherein confirming of a reservation comprises the step of issuing a ticket for the goods or services.

Claim 29 (previously presented) In the process of claim 25 wherein the improvement further comprises assignment by the computer program of a new reservation to a robot, the robot assigning all or any portion of the limiting standards to the reservation according to limitations imposed by the standards and issuing a warning message to the reserving entity in the event the reservation is not confirmed.

Claim 30 (previously presented) In the process of claim 29 wherein the improvement comprises checking of reservations by the computer program for expired limiting standards and assigning of the reservation to a second robot which checks the reservation to determine if the reservation is confirmed and, if not, either ignores, cancels, queues, or updates the reservation or adds another warning message to the reservation for informing the reserving entity depending upon a second set of limiting standards.

Claim 31 (previously presented) In the process of claim 25 wherein the process steps are effected remotely of the database of reservations.

Claim 32 (**canceled**)

Claim 33 (currently amended) In a system for firming flights in a central reservations system wherein the system includes a computer and at least one computer program for providing instructions to the computer, the central reservations system listing flight reservations issued by at least one reserving entity, the reservations being subject to ticketing according to a set of ticketing time limit rules, reservations and time limit rules to be applied to the reservations being obtained from the central reservations system, new reservations not previously subjected to flight firming being identified and assigned for

flight firming, the new reservation being assigned one or more rules of the ticketing time limit rules and having a warning message added to the reservation in the event the reservation is not ticketed, the reserving entity being informed of the need to ticket the reservation subject to a set of conditions, the reservation being contained in a central database, the improvement comprising:

means for coordinating access to the database to acquire each reservation for operations thereon and for scheduling operations on each reservation; and,

means for returning each reservation to the database after the performance of operations thereon to a predetermined location within the database to thereby update the database, functions accomplished by the coordinating means and the reservation returning means being accomplished by the computer.

Claim 34 (previously presented) In the system of claim 33 wherein the improvement further comprises means for checking reservations to determine whether a ticket has been issued and, if not, either ignores, cancels, queues, updates the reservation or adds another warning message to the reservation for transmittal to the reserving entity.

Claim 35 (previously presented) In the system of claim 33 wherein the computer program contains a set of standards indicative of suspicious names established according to certain criteria, the improvement further comprising means for checking the reservations for suspicious names.

Claim 36 (previously presented) In the system of claim 35 wherein data relating to the reservations and in a predetermined location is in a queue and the data is in the form of a multiplicity of batches, the improvement further comprising means for increasing size of at least certain of the batches in response to increasing levels of flight

firming activity by the computer.

Claim 37 (previously presented) In the system of claim 33 wherein the improvement further comprises means for distributing data across the database to prevent data from becoming concentrated in any particular location within the database.

Claim 38 (previously presented) In the system of claim 33 wherein the improvement further comprises means for checking a reservation for duplicate flight segments.

Claims 39, 40 and 41 (**canceled**)

Claim 42 (previously presented) In the system of claim 33 wherein the system is remote from the central reservations system.

Claim 43 (previously presented) In the system of claim 33 wherein the improvement further comprises means for checking reservations previously subjected to flight firming and assigning said reservations for further flight firming processing to determine whether the reservations have been confirmed.

Claim 44 (previously presented) In the system of claim 33 wherein the previously checked reservation is not confirmed, the improvement further comprising means for ignoring, canceling, queuing or updating the reservation according to a further set of rules and transmitting such processing to the reserving entity.

Claim 45 (currently amended) In a flight firming process for automated firming of flight reservations made by a reserving entity for services or goods which are to be confirmed by payment for said services or goods prior to delivery of the services or goods, which reservations are listed in a central database of reservations, the database being accessed with a computer operated by a computer program having a set of limiting

standards to be applied to each reservation determined to be unconfirmed, the reserving entity being informed in an automated manner in accordance with the set of limiting standards of the need to confirm the reservation before expiration of time limitations established by the set of limiting standards, the improvement comprising:

coordinating access to the database to acquire data for operations therewith and scheduling said operations;

returning the data to the database after at least some of said operations are performed thereto to a predetermined location within the database, to thereby update the database, all steps being accomplished by the computer program; and,

checking said reservations for duplicate reservation numbers.

Claim 46 (previously presented) In the process of claim 45 wherein the predetermined location is a queue and the data is present in the form of a multiplicity of batches.

Claim 47 (previously presented) In the process of claim 46 wherein the improvement further comprises the step of increasing sizes of the batches in response to increasing levels of process activity.

Claim 48 (previously presented) In the process of claim 45 wherein confirming of a reservation comprises the step of issuing a ticket for the goods or services.

Claim 49 (previously presented) In the process of claim 45 wherein the improvement further comprises assignment by the computer program of a new reservation to a robot, the robot assigning all or any portion of the limiting standards to the reservation according to limitations imposed by the standards and issuing a warning message to the reserving entity in the event the reservation is not confirmed.

Claim 50 (previously presented) In the process of claim 49 wherein the improvement comprises checking of reservations by the computer program for expired limiting standards and assigning of the reservation to a second robot which checks the reservation to determine if the reservation is confirmed and, if not, either ignores, cancels, queues, or updates the reservation or adds another warning message to the reservation for informing the reserving entity depending upon a second set of limiting standards.

Claim 51 (previously presented) In the process of claim 45 wherein the process steps are effected remotely of the database of reservations.

Claim 52 (**canceled**)

Claim 53 (previously presented) In a system for firming flights in a central reservations system wherein the system includes a computer and at least one computer program for providing instructions to the computer, the central reservations system listing flight reservations issued by at least one reserving entity, the reservations being subject to ticketing according to a set of ticketing time limit rules, reservations and time limit rules to be applied to the reservations being obtained from the central reservations system, new reservations not previously subjected to flight firming being identified and assigned for flight firming, the new reservation being assigned one or more rules of the ticketing time limit rules and having a warning message added to the reservation in the event the reservation is not ticketed, the reserving entity being informed of the need to ticket the reservation subject to a set of conditions, the reservation being contained in a central database, the improvement comprising:

means for coordinating access to the database to acquire each reservation for operations thereon and for scheduling operations on each reservation;

means for returning each reservation to the database after the performance of operations thereon to a predetermined location within the database to thereby update the database; and,

means for checking a reservation for duplicate ticket numbers, functions accomplished by the coordinating means, the reservation returning means and the reservation checking means being accomplished by the computer.

Claim 54 (previously presented) In the system of claim 53 wherein the improvement further comprises means for checking reservations to determine whether a ticket has been issued and, if not, either ignores, cancels, queues, updates the reservation or adds another warning message to the reservation for transmittal to the reserving entity.

Claim 55 (previously presented) In the system of claim 53 wherein the computer program contains a set of standards indicative of suspicious names established according to certain criteria, the improvement further comprising means for checking the reservations for suspicious names.

Claim 56 (previously presented) In the system of claim 55 wherein data relating to the reservations and in a predetermined location is in a queue and the data is in the form of a multiplicity of batches, the improvement further comprising means for increasing size of at least certain of the batches in response to increasing levels of flight firming activity by the computer.

Claim 57 (previously presented) In the system of claim 53 wherein the improvement further comprises means for distributing data across the database to prevent data from becoming concentrated in any particular location within the database.

Claim 58 (previously presented) In the system of claim 53 wherein the

improvement further comprises means for checking a reservation for duplicate flight segments.

Claim 59 (previously presented) In the system of claim 53 wherein the improvement further comprises means for checking a reservation for existing ticket numbers.

Claim 60 (previously presented) In the system of claim 53 wherein the improvement further comprises means for checking any reservation without a ticket number for existing ticketing time limit rules.

Claim 61 (previously presented) In the system of claim 53 wherein the system is remote from the central reservations system.

Claim 62 (previously presented) In the system of claim 53 wherein the improvement further comprises means for checking reservations previously subjected to flight firming and assigning said reservations for further flight firming processing to determine whether the reservations have been confirmed.

Claim 63 (previously presented) In the system of claim 53 wherein the previously checked reservation is not confirmed, the improvement further comprising means for ignoring, canceling, queuing or updating the reservation according to a further set of rules and transmitting such processing to the reserving entity.